

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01652 271809Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7285
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR LE US IS
SUBJ: NEXT STEPS IN LEBANON

1. ARRIVAL OF UNIFIL CONTINGENTS AND ISRAELI AFFIRMATIONS OF
INTENT TO WITHDRAW HAVE GIVEN GOL SHOT IN THE ARM AND BOTH
PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER HAVE MADE STATEMENTS CONDEMNING
INTERFERENCE (MEANING PALESTINIANS, IRAQIS, ETC.) IN LEBANESE
INTERNAL AFFAIRS. STATEMENTS MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH TO
OUTSIDERS BUT ARE BOLD STROKES BY LOCAL STANDARDS. GOL HAS
ALSO PREVAILED UPON SYRIANS (OR PERHAPS SYRIANS PREVAILED ON
THEM) TO HAVE STATEMENT ISSUED BY ADF PROHIBITING FURTHER
INFUSIONS OF MILITARY SUPPLIES OR PERSONNEL AND RELIEF
SUPPLIES WITHOUT CONCURRENCE GOL. AS OF MARCH 27 THIS SEEMS
TO BE WORKING. UNIFIL SEEMS WELL ON WAY TO ASSUMPTION OF ITS
DUTIES AND, WHILE THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VERY DIFFICULT
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01652 271809Z

QUESTIONS TO BE SETTLED, SUCH AS WHO WILL POLICE THE
AREA SOUTH OF THE ZAHRANI, A MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER
HAS NOW BEEN CROSSED: A DEUS EX MACHINA HAS ARRIVED IN
PERSON OF UNIFIL. WE HOPE LEBANESE WILL, AS IS THEIR
HABIT, NOW FIND THE MEANS TO MAKE THEIR OWN INTERNAL
COMPROMISE AND GET ON WITH THE JOB OF REBUILDING LEBANON.

2. WE SEE AT THIS POINT THREE PRINCIPAL WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN ENCOURAGE THIS PROCESS. FIRST IS TO CONTINUE OUR POLITICAL SUPPORT, WHICH HAS BEEN INVALUABLE DURING THE PRESENT CRISIS. NO ONE HERE HAS ANY DOUBT THAT PASSAGE OF SC RESOLUTION 425 WAS LARGELY DUE TO OUR EFFORTS AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION MADE TO US AS A RESULT. WHILE WE WOULD HOPE THAT UNIFIL WILL BE ABLE TO DO ITS OWN POLITICKING NOW, WE SENSE THAT WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CONTINUING EFFORT WITH VARIOUS PARTIES, NOTABLY THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS, THE ISRAELIS AND THE SYRIANS TO HELP KEEP THE WHEELS TURNING.

3. FORTUNATELY, THE COMMITMENT OF FRENCH FORCES MEANS FRENCH WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE ACTIVE, AND THIS SHOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT. THEIR ROLE HERE HAS DECLINED IN RECENT YEARS, BUT THEY STILL HAVE A VERY STRONG EMOTIONAL ATTRACTION FOR MANY LEBANESE WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT ASSET TO THEM. THEY ARE ALSO IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH ARAFAT AND IN SOME RESPECTS ARE BETTER PLACED THAN WE TO KEEP THE PARTIES FROM TEARING AT EACH OTHER. BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IS LESS IMPORTANT, BUT THEY TOO ARE IN CONTACT WITH PLO AND ARE NOT WITHOUT INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIANS. WE THINK IT IMPORTANT THAT ALL THREE OF US COORDINATE AND WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER IN COMING WEEKS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01652 271809Z

4. SECOND WAY IN WHICH WE CAN HELP IS WITH REBUILDING OF LEBANESE ARMY. THIS MUST NECESSARILY BE LONG-TERM EFFORT, BUT ARMY HAS SOME IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR EQUIPMENT (PRINCIPALLY TENTS AND RIFLES) IN PREPARATION FOR SENDING FORCES TO THE SOUTH. WE THINK IT VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE ARMY GET THERE AS SOON AS IT CAN DO SO IN GOOD ORDER AND HOPE THAT WITHIN TWO OR THREE WEEKS IT CAN START MOVING UNITS. OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE IT WITH MUCH (IF ANYTHING) IN THE WAY OF ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT WITHIN A PERIOD, BUT WE ARE TRYING TO GET A BETTER FIX ON THEIR EXACT NEEDS AND WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH WASHINGTON IN THAT REGARD. MEANWHILE, WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE MILITARY SURVEY TEAM ON MARCH 31 TO TAKE A LOOK AT REQUIREMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR UTILIZATION OF THE \$50 MILLION IN FY 78 FMS CREDITS.

5. FINALLY, AS A CONCOMITANT TO THE EXTENSION OF GOL AUTHORITY TO SOUTHERN LEBANON, A SERIOUS PROGRAM OF RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THAT HITHERTO NEGLECTED REGION. I HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS BRIEFLY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND TOLD

HIM WE WOULD HAVE A MODEST AMOUNT OF HOUSING MONEY AVAILABLE. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY HERE TO DO SOMETHING SERIOUS ABOUT NATION BUILDING IN LEBANON. SPECIFICALLY, I THINK WE SHOULD REORIENT OUR PRESENT PROGRAMS, SUCH AS THE RURAL WATER PROGRAM, TOWARDS THE SOUTH, AND WE SHOULD SEEK NEW GRANT FUNDS FOR FY 79 TO PERMIT US TO CONTINUE THOSE AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER YEAR. WE NEED FURTHER DATA BEFORE WE CAN REACH ANY FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND MAKE DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE THERE, BUT AT THIS POINT WE ASSUME THE PRIORITY FIELDS SHOULD BE HOUSING, RURAL WATER AND SANITATION, MEDICAL AND EDUCATION SERVICES, AND COMMUNICATIONS. WE WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS QUESTION WITH THE GOL IN COMING

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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01652 271809Z

WEEKS, BUT HOPE DEPARTMENT AND AID/W WILL FOCUS ON WHAT THE POSSIBILITIES ARE IN TERMS OF FUNDS. OUR ABILITY TO DISCUSS QUESTION WILL DEPEND TO LARGE EXTENT ON WHAT WE ARE LIKELY TO HAVE AVAILABLE TO SPEND.

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